

**Implementing Direct Education and Impact/Outcome Evaluation
Guidelines for Local Health Departments
Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch (NEOPB)**

Implementing Direct Education Curricula

Direct education is defined as interventions where participants are actively engaged in the learning process with an educator and/or interactive media. Direct education sessions are at least 15 minutes and data such as CalFresh participation, status, age, gender, and race/ethnicity is collected for each participant. Direct education includes a nutrition education class, but does not include, for example, attending a health fair or hearing an advertisement promoting the health benefits of vegetables on the radio.

USDA and NEOPB require that local health departments (LHDs) ensure fidelity of any direct education intervention by implementing curricula as they were developed and shown to be effective. This requirement means that:

- Curricula are implemented in their entirety, without omitting any lessons or other material unless it is described as optional
- Training materials and lesson plans provided with curricula are implemented as intended

Impact/Outcome Evaluation

The NEOPB requires LHDs that receive over \$350,000 per year to conduct an impact/outcome evaluation (IOE) of their direct education activities using the guidelines presented below. Because of anticipated decreases in funding, LHDs should determine IOE requirements for their 3-year FFY 2017-2019 work plans based on anticipated FFY 2018 funding levels. However, all LHDs are encouraged to participate in IOE. In cases where an LHD budget is greater than \$350,000 in FFY 17 and then falls below this level in subsequent federal fiscal years, participation is strongly encouraged but not required.

These guidelines were developed to generate sound information through rigorous evaluation that can be used to improve nutrition education activities or develop new ones. Technical assistance is available throughout the year to ensure the guidelines are applied to produce valid evaluation results as well as to fit unique situations.

LHDs are expected to conduct a direct education intervention that includes face-to-face contact with the same individuals for at least 30 minutes, on five or more different occasions. An IOE project must be conducted with a single intervention, i.e. one curriculum or the same combination of curricula. It is typical for LHDs to conduct an intervention across multiple sites and combine data from multiple sites as long as they are all implementing the same intervention. This intervention may take the form of a five-class curriculum; however, this is not a requirement. Curricula with any number of lessons can be used for IOE as long as (1) at least five 30-minute sessions are taught between pre-tests and post-tests, and (2) all curricula are implemented as intended. Examples of ways this requirement could be met include:

- A 5-class series of lessons that are each 50 minutes
- One 45-minute stand-alone class, followed by a series of four 60-minute lessons
- A series of eight 30-minute lessons

LHDs are expected to submit responses for at least 100 matched surveys, i.e., a pre-test (collected before the intervention) and post-test (collected after the intervention, or a minimum of at least 5 sessions) for the same individuals.

LHDs are expected to measure dietary and physical activity behaviors, and factors that influence these behaviors, using a pre-test/post-test survey design.

LHDs are responsible for collecting, entering, and analyzing their data and are expected to submit data and a report by July 31st of each year. Data entry templates are provided by the NEOPB for all required surveys to assist with data entry and analysis.

LHDs are expected to use an age-appropriate questionnaire for the pre/post-test surveys, selected from the following:

Children in 3rd-8th grades: Youth Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey (previously titled “Network Youth Survey”)

Adolescents in 9th-12th grades: High School Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey (previously titled “Network High School Survey”)

Adults: Food Behavior Checklist (FBC) or Fruit and Vegetable Checklist (FVC)

With approval from NEOPB Research and Evaluation Section (RES) staff, LHDs whose primary intervention is Rethink Your Drink may substitute an approved beverage survey from the NEOPB Compendium of Surveys.

LHDs are expected to submit a draft evaluation plan for the next fiscal year with their final report by July 31st of each year. This plan should make specific the proposed strategies for implementing both the intervention and evaluation, and incorporate findings from the prior year’s evaluation. LHDs that have previously conducted IOE are expected to plan and implement a more rigorous evaluation each year as a way to build evaluation capacity gradually, from year to year. IOE plans are reviewed and approved via a formal teleconference process, attended by LHD and RES staff, along with the LHD’s Project Officer.

For more information on **Direct Education**

Curricula, contact:

Poppy Strobe

margaret.strobe@cdph.ca.gov

(916) 449-5360

For more information on **Impact/Outcome**

Evaluation, contact:

Carolyn Rider

carolyn.rider@cdph.ca.gov

(916) 449-5547